Sl. No.	States	No. of villages in the state	Villages provided with telecom facilities	Villages not having telecom facility	Percentage of Villages not having telecom facility
4.	AS	22224	10568	11656	52
5.	BH	79208	19088	60120	76
6.	Delhi	191	191	0	0
7	GJ	18125	13923	4202	23
8.	Goa	407	361	46	11
9.	HP	16997	6710	10287	61
10.	HY	6850	6807	43	1
11.	JK	6764	2683	4081	60
12.	KL	1530	1530	0	0
13.	KT	27066	21544	5522	20
14.	Manipur	2394	605	1789	75
15.	Meghalaya	5629	984	4645	83
16.	MH	42060	28908	13152	31
17.	Mizoram	770	577	193	25
18.	MP	71526	39245	32281	45
19.	Nagaland	1192	528	664	56
20.	OR	46989	19213	27776	59
21.	PB	12687	11938	749	6
22.	RJ	38634	21345	17289	45
23.	Sikkim	427	211	216	51
24.	TN	17991	17648	343	2
25.	Tripura	862	549	313	36
26.	UPE	75698	31254	44444	59
27.	UPW	39551	16861	22690	57
28.	WB	38378	13080	25251	66
	TOTAL	607491	310019	297425	49

Enhancement of Local Call Rates

515. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while Government have plans to cut down the number of free calls on a telephone and hike the local call rates, it has substantially reduced by about 60% the STD and ISD cal rates; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) how far the step cuts into the pocket of common local phone users, while benefitting trade, business and long distance phone users?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) No, Sir. The Department of

Telecom has no such proposal at present. However, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, formed under the TRAI Act, 1997, has brought out a Consultation paper on telecom tariffs, in which some changes have been proposed, as briefly summarised in the Statement (*See* below).

The TRAI are in the process of consulting Service Providers Consumer Organisations and the general public to ascertain their views regarding the proposed changes.

(b) The impact on the users would be known only after finalisation of tariff proposals.

Statement

Information Sheet on Proposed Tariffs for Telecom Services

1. BASIC SERVICES

(a) Escalating Call Charge

Present call charges escalate with the number of calls made. This implies that the per pulse charges with the number of calls made.

Proposed call charge is invariant with the number of calls made. Another difference is that these charges are proposed as a cap or ceiling and therefore discounts (such as colume discounts) can be given under the proposed scheme. This tariff policy is more in line with the general policies followed elsewhere.

Table below gives the present and proposed call charges.

Number of bi-monthly calls	per call (per pulse) charge in rural areas (Rs.)	Per call (per pulse) charge in urban area (Rs.)	Proposed cap for per call (pulse) charge in rural and urban areas
Up to 120	Free	Free	Free
121 to 150	Free	Free	1.30
151 to 250	Free	0.80	1.30
251 to 450	00.60	0.80	1.30
451 to 500	00.80	0.80	1.30
501 to 1,000	1	1	1.30
1,001 to 2,000	1.25	1.25	1.30
More than 2,000	1.40	1.40	1.30

As shown below, these call charges translate into different tariffs depending on the pulse rate that is use together with these charges. For example, even though our proposed charges per call (pulse) are higher than for most of the above mentioned call slabs, our proposed tariffs for long distance and international calls are much less than the present tariffs based on the prevailing charges.

(b) *Local Calls*

Present Rate: Ranges from Rs. 0.60 to Rs. 1.40 per call for rural area, and Rs. 0.80 to Rs. 1.40 per call for urban area (for 5 minute call).

Proposed Rate: A cap of Rs. 1.30 per three minute call for both rural and urban areas.

For rural PCOs and VPTs the prevailing call charge (Rs. 1 per Call) is proposed as the cap.

Three minute pulse is proposed because average call holding time is

slightly below 3 miunutes. Same cap proposed for rural and urban areas because local call area for rural area is now *much larger* that the area when rates were last fixed.

Principle applied: Call charge equal to average operational cost. This charge is less than the cost of local call in other countries.

(c) *Free Calls*

Present Allowance: 150 bi-monthly calls in urban area, and 250 bi-monthly calls in rural area.

Proposed: A *floor* 120 calls bi-monthly (or 60 monthly calls)

Principle applied: Provide a *floor* for the number of monthly or bi-monthly free calls based on the average number of calls made by low callers, in particular those making up to 150 calls bi-monthly.

(d) *Rentals*

Present Rental: A cap of Rs. 50 per month for rural, and ranges in general from Rs. 75 to 190 per month for others (this rental, as for call charges, is billed bi-monthly)

Proposed Rental: A cap of Rs. 120 per month for rural areas, and a cap for others ranging from Rs. 160 to Rs. 310 per month.

Proposed social package: For areas where proposed cap for rental is above the highest prevailing rental (i.e., 190 per month), a social package reduces the range of rentals to Rs. 160 to Rs. 250 per month. A floor or zero free calls is provided with the social package and it is available ôbly to low callers (i.e. those making up to 60 bi-monthly calls)

Principle applied: Rentals should cover capital cost. Since cost based rental would imply too hi h and sudden and increase in rentals the proposed rental is below cost. The increase in rental is decided on the grounds that it should be equal to about the inflation rate from the time when rentals were last increased (i.e. since early 1993)

(e) *Domestic long distance calls*

Present situation: There are eight distance slabs and rates very considerably because of escalating tariffs.

Proposal

A reduction is proposed for both the number of distance slabs and in the domestic long distance charges.

Distance slabs

The present distance slabs for STD charging cover the following radial distances between two exchanges;

0 to 20 Kms	21 to 35 Kms	36 to 50 Kms	51 to 100 Kms	101 to 200 Kms	201 to 500 Kms	501 to 1000 Kms	Above 1000 Kms

The proposed distance slabs are

0 to 50 Kms	51 to 200 Kms	201to 500 Kms	Above 500 Kms

Tariffs for domestic long distance calls

The proposed tariffs for domestic long distance calls imply a reduction for most distance slabs and call charges. The Table below compares the present situation with the proposed charges for domestic long distance calls.

Radial distance between two exchanges (kilometers)	Present per minute tariff for call charge ranging from Rs. 0.80 to Rs. 1.40 per call (pulse) Rs. for a call held for (three minutes)	Proposed per Minute charge if the tariff equal to the *proposed tariff cap* Rs. for a call held for (three minutes)
0 to 20	02.7 to 0.47	0.43
21 to 35	0.53 to 0.93	0.43
36 to 50	1.33 to 2.33	0.43
51 to 100	4.00 to 7.00	3.90
101 to 200	6.13 to 10.73	3.90
201 to 500	12.00 to 21.00	9.75
501 to 1000	16.00 to 28.00	19.50
Above 1000	24.00 to 42.00	19.50

Note: To simplify, the most commonly used call charges, i.e. Rs. 0.80 to Rs. 1.40 are presented in the Table. For Rs. 0.60 per call (pulse), the corresponding charges are as follows (in Rs.): 0.20, 0.40, 1.00, 3.00, 4.60, 9.00, 12.00, 18.00. The comparison here is based on the local call area as defined prior to the charge announced recently, i.e. on 15 August 1998. The charge in local area will affect (i.e. reduce) the present rates paid in the lower distance slab categories.

Once again, caps for call charges are lower for rural PCOs and VPTs than for general subscribers. It is proposed that the charge in call charge be implemented in phases.

Principle followed: Long distance and international call charge should be reduced in the tariff re-balancing exercise. This will also encourage subscribers to make more long distance and international calls.

(i) *International Calls*

Present situation:

The escalating call charge implies a range of prevailing international calls charges. These are:

Categories of Countries	Charge per minute in the prevailing scheme of Rs. 0.6 per pulse; Rs.)	Charge per minute in the prevailing (rate scheme of Rs. 0.8 per pulse; Rs.)	Charge per minute in the prevailing (rate scheme of Re. 1 per pulse; Rs.)	Charge per minute in the prevailing (rate scheme of Rs. 1.25 per pulse; Rs.)	Charge per minute in the prevailing (rate scheme of Rs. 1.4 per pulse; Rs.)
SAARC countries and other Neighbouring Countries	18	24	30	37.5	42
Countries in Africa, Europe Gulf, Asia and Oceania	30	40	50	62.5	70

Countries in the American Countinent and Other Places in Western Hemisphere	36	48	60	75	84

Proposed rates are in terms of caps. They are:

Categories of Countries	*Proposed Tariff Cap* (Rs. per minute)
SAARC countries and other Neighbouring Countries	Rs. 19.50
Countries in Africa, Europe, Gulf, Asia and Oceania	Rs. 30.00
Countries in the American Continent and other places in Western Hemisphere	Rs. 39.00

Similar to other situations, caps for call charges are lower for rural PCOs and VPTs than for general subscribers. It is proposed that the change in call charge be implemented in phases.

Token strike against Corporatisation of DOT

516. SHRI GAYA SINGH:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a one day token strike was called by the staff unions of the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) on November 12, 1998 to protest against the corporation and subsequent privatisation of DOT;

(b) if is, the details and its impact on the telecome services in the country; and

(c) the Government's reaction to their demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Some Unrecognised Unions of DOT launched a one day Token Strike for settlement of their pending demands. The demand that there should be no corporatisation of DOT is only one of the demands. However, the question of privatisation figuring now in the Rajya Sabha Question does not find a place in their demands. The remaining demands relate to service matters like upgradation and the anomalies in the pay scales of the DOT employees and improvement in other benefits which became admissible consequent upon the recommendations of the 5th CPC.

(b) On the day of Token Strike i.e. 12.11.98, the local/STD/ISD services through-out the country remained normal. However, in the Manual Trunk Services and Telegraph Services, the work was affected in Calcutta Telephone District and moderately in some parts of West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Assam Circles. In the remaining Circles, the position was reported to be, by and large normal.

(c) Their demands are being examined.

अतिविशिष्ट व्यक्तियों पर टेलीफोन की बकाया राशियां

517. श्री राजनाथ सिंह "सूर्य":
श्री सूर्यभान पाटील वहाडणे: